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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Disinformation: Twisted facts distort reality

President Reagan told The Washington Post last week that "we've been subjected, in this country, to a very sophisticated lobbying campaign by a totalitarian government — the Sandinistas. There has been a disinformation program that is virtually worldwide, and we know that the Soviets and Cubans have such a disinformation network that is beyond anything we can match."

The Post in particular, and the liberal media in general dismiss the very notion of Soviet and Soviet-proxy disinformation as a manifestation of mindless anti-communism. In a column headlined "Sandinista Disinformation?" — the question mark was designed to discredit the president's irrefutable statement of fact — The Post's deputy editorial page editor, Stephen S. Rosenfeld, wrote, in effect, "Yes, but so what?"

So a lot, Mr. Rosenfeld.

Vietnamese officials (e.g., General Giap himself) and defectors have confirmed that disinformation operations in the U.S. media and on Capitol Hill played a major role in changing perceptions about that war.

The former justice minister of so-called National Liberation Front of South Vietnam — created and controlled by the Hanoi government — escaped among the boat people. He has testified that clever disinformation operations led us to believe that the 1968 Tet offensive was an unmitigated disaster for the United States.

So pervasive was this perception — this misperception — that President Johnson felt compelled to abdicate a few months later. The reality, according to Truong Nhu Tang, was the other way round. Tet was an unmitigated disaster for Hanoi.

There is every indication that the liberal media and the Congress do not support the Reagan administration's policy in Central America — notwithstanding the endorsement of the bipartisan Kissinger Commission report in January 1984. But there is also every indication that disinformation and Soviet-Cuban-Nicaraguan "active measures" have played a crucial role in laying

the groundwork for yet another U.S. strategic defeat.

There are many groups in the United States whose media connections are an open secret. Their mission is to shade, embroider and distort the truth for their own disinformation agenda, while excoriating anyone else who is less than truthful.

These groups have helped nurture an entire new generation of journalists who have made it their duty to transform America's sworn enemies into misunderstood innocents, while at the same time portraying our own leaders as the foes of democracy and freedom.

Apologists for communism in Cuba, Vietnam, Angola, Mozambique, Ethiopia, Nicaragua, Afghanistan and elsewhere have argued that they were driven down the Marxist path of hostility because of abuse by the U.S. government. That this is sheer, unadulterated, disinformation is confirmed by communist dissi-

dents and defectors, yet it is still eagerly regurgitated by the liberal establishment on both sides of the Atlantic.

How is it possible that so many intelligent people accept these dangerous misconceptions as the geopolitical gospel? Disinformation is the key. The Washington Times, beginning today and ending Friday, will unravel "The Network" that has been poisoning the lifeblood of democracy.

How does it do this? Quite simply, by distorting the data and corrupting the process of understanding in such a way that it leads public opinion to react differently than if it understood the true nature of reality.

It would behoove the Congress to take note before our elected representatives vote yet another resolution that will once again make it possible for the Marxists to steal a revolution from the people, only to impose a totalitarian dictatorship more draconian than the authoritarian regime that was overthrown.

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THE NETWORK TARGET: Reagan's Central American Policy